

[T]he art of medicine is lost and actually has been replaced by fear.

This is the world we have entered after the fall of Roe. And it is a wake-up call for every Member of this Senate. Don't turn your eyes away from it. This is the reality of the Supreme Court decision.

Our constitutional rights should not, and cannot, differ State by State. For 50 years, this was a fundamentally constitutional guaranteed freedom. And it needs to be protected again by Federal law.

I don't think this Court is going to stop with overturning Roe. I commended to all my colleagues, there was a speech made last Thursday by Senator KAINE of Virginia. Before he was in politics, he was a civil rights lawyer. And he is a good one. And he explained the 14th Amendment and what it means if we were to take the Alito Court analysis and basis and reject the notion that the 14th Amendment defines our citizenship in so many different ways.

Justice Clarence Thomas has indicated the far right majority is coming next for the right to family birth control and contraception.

Oh, that can't be true, Senator. They aren't going to go after birth control pills—watch them; they have already announced they are underway—and marriage equality and making our decisions about the future of our families.

This Senate must act to protect marriage equality and all the fundamental human rights that are under threat by this radical Supreme Court. The question, though, when November comes around, will the American people care, or will they take a nap? Will they decide it is somebody else's problem? Well, I hope they don't because these problems are really facing all of us as Americans, whether we like it or not. We would rather not talk about this issue, but the Supreme Court gives us no choice.

Now, let's be sensible. These are medical decisions that should be made by medical professionals.

#### FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, 2 weeks ago, the Center for Disease Control issued an alert: There was a listeria outbreak that sent nearly 2 dozen people in 10 States to the hospital.

For those who may not know, listeria is the bacteria that causes listeriosis. It is serious. It is a life-threatening illness. In most cases, the infection causes fever, sometimes confusion, loss of balance; but in some cases, it can be deadly.

Tragically, an expectant mother from Massachusetts who contracted it lost her baby. And another person in my home State of Illinois lost her life. Her name was Mary Billman. She was from Pesotum, IL. It is a small downstate community, about 15 miles south of Champaign.

In January, she went to Florida to visit her daughter. One day, she de-

cided to grab an ice cream cone. Harmless, right? As it turned out, no. That ice cream was contaminated. Ice cream is the most likely source of this listeria outbreak. Mary Billman was 79 years old. The listeria that she faced took her life.

This outbreak is one example of a long list of outbreaks in America, which are becoming way too common. The Food and Drug Administration is responsible for regulating 80 percent of our Nation's food supply. Nearly all of the foods we buy at the supermarket are supposed to be guaranteed as safe by the Food and Drug Administration. So when we pick up a box of cereal for the kids, a bag of lettuce, a jar of peanut butter, a pint of ice cream, we assume it has been inspected. We assume it is safe.

Here is the problem: Too often, that is not the case. The FDA is failing to uphold its most basic food safety responsibility: inspecting facilities. Over the past decade, the number of inspections it performs has fallen by nearly 60 percent—60-percent decline in inspections in the last decade. And to add insult to injury, that decline happened after Congress passed the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act—a 2011 bill, which I offered, that instructed the FDA to increase the number of inspections. They did the opposite.

If that weren't bad enough, in 2017, the HHS inspector general concluded that, even when the FDA did inspect facilities, the Agency did not always take action when it uncovered significant inspection violations. We know that story.

This summer, a bacteria known as Cronobacter contaminated infant formula, leading to nationwide shortages. The FDA was alerted to this problem 4 months before it took any action—4 months. So even when the FDA performs an inspection and identifies a threat to public health, it doesn't take timely action, not even when the problem can sicken and kill adults, children, infants. That is hard to imagine.

The FDA is adrift. And our most vulnerable people in America—children, mothers, and older Americans—are at risk.

Last week, I introduced a bill that would transfer all of FDA's food responsibilities to a new Agency outside the FDA that we hope will actually do its job. We are calling it simply the Food Safety Administration. Congresswoman ROSA DELAUNO, my friend and a Representative from the State of Connecticut, has introduced the companion bill in the House. Our bill represents a clean slate for food safety in America. It would create a new Food Safety Administration that would be run by food safety experts who were focused on protecting the Nation's food supply.

If I went into detail of the responsibilities of different Federal Agencies to inspect foods, you wouldn't believe it. If you have a cheese pizza, Food and Drug Administration; put pepperoni on

the pizza, now it is the Department of Agriculture. It changes based on definitions that might have made sense sometime in the past, make no sense anymore.

On behalf of the 15 million Americans who contract a foodborne illness each year and tens of thousands who are hospitalized, it is time to stop talking about it and do something.

The FDA failed my constituent Mary Billman, along with 3,000 Americans like her who lose their lives every year to foodborne illness. Many of these deaths are preventable, but they will keep happening if we don't fix our Nation's defunct food safety system.

We say America is the wealthiest Nation in human history. We are blessed, we know, with one of the most abundant agriculture industries. And we are home to some of the best and brightest scientists in the world. So there is absolutely no excuse for allowing the FDA's food safety failures to persist. With our legislation, we can replace this broken system with one that will finally protect our families.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### INFLATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, at each of my 99 county meetings and in conversations with Iowans generally, the record cost of living is top of mind as Iowa families feel the impact of 9.1 percent inflation. They feel that on their family budgets, for sure.

Due to rampant inflation spurred by reckless government spending, consumer prices are escalating at a historic pace. Middle-class Americans are paying more for everything from gasoline, food, and shelter, to home furnishings, prescription drugs, and clothing.

Since President Biden took office January 2021, consumer prices have increased, on average, 12 percent nationally. As a result, the average Iowa household has seen its monthly living expenses increase to \$670 a month. The rising cost of transportation, energy, and food has hit household budgets particularly hard.

Since January 2021, Americans on average are paying an extra \$206 a month on energy, \$334 a month on transportation and gas, and an additional \$76 a month for food. It is no wonder inflation is the No. 1 concern that I hear about as I tour Iowa's 99 counties.

Rising wages have helped some Iowans manage the rising cost of living. However, for most, rising prices have far outpaced the wage gains. While trying to make up an extra \$600 a month is hard enough for wage earners, it is next to impossible for senior

citizens who are on fixed incomes. For senior citizens, there is no prospect of getting a raise like you might get if you have a job. They must make do by stretching their Social Security checks, their pensions, or investment income, if they have that. They must count on just stretching that as far as they can.

While there is an annual cost of living adjustment intended to maintain the purchasing power of Social Security benefits, this adjustment lags inflation increases. The 5.9 percent COLA for 2022 was the largest increase since 1982, the last time we had this out-of-control inflation. However, that is far below the 9.1 percent annual inflation rate reported for June. So just like wages go up 5.5, they can't keep up with a 9.1 percent increase inflation.

So you get a 5.9 percent increase in your COLA for Social Security; that is far below the 9.1 percent increase in inflation. Now, the Social Security Administration reports the 2023 COLA will be between 7.3 percent and 10.8 percent. Well, that might help. But will it make up for what inflation is?

Unfortunately, seniors have another 6 months until they see this relief in their benefit payments.

The current turmoil in the stock market has made it even harder for seniors to keep their heads above water. They are seeing their retirement savings in 401(k)s, their IRAs, and their non-tax-advantaged accounts eroded by stock market declines, by inflation, and by taxes.

Seniors are understandably looking to the administration and to this very Congress to take action to address inflation and rising prices. Unfortunately, all the administration and a majority in Congress have offered them are false assurances, more reckless spending, and damaging tax hikes.

It is time that we try an entirely different approach. That approach should be one focused on fiscal prudence, targeted non-inflation inducing relief, and increasing market competition or boosting supply.

The most important thing Congress can do to fight inflation is stop its reckless spending. Even better would be to trim the budget to eliminate unnecessary spending.

As for providing inflation relief, it must be done in a way that won't add to our growing debt or further fuel the flames of inflation. One way to do this is to provide targeted inflation relief that incentivizes and rewards taxpayers who save rather than spend.

This is the approach taken in the Middle-Class Savings and Investment Act, which I introduced last month. Under my legislation, most middle-class savings and investment income would be subject to zero tax. This means middle-class seniors would be subject to no Federal income tax on their long-term capital gains and dividend income. They would also be exempt from Federal tax on up to \$600 of interest income that they earn in a

year. Exempting most middle-class savings from tax not only provides relief to those seniors and to others but also will reduce tax bias that favors consumption over saving.

While not a silver bullet by any stretch of the imagination to stop inflation, encouraging more consumers to save rather than spend may help reduce inflation pressures by dampening demand.

Importantly, my proposal is fully paid for, so it won't add to our unsustainable debt and deficits.

In addition to practicing fiscal responsibility and providing sensible, targeted relief, I support policies designed to hold down prices by increasing supply and promoting greater competition in the marketplace. A prime example of this is my work to rein in out-of-control prescription drug prices.

Americans—especially our seniors—are paying too much for their prescription drugs. AARP says brand-name drugs that seniors use are going up more than twice the rate of inflation. Recent data indicates that nearly a half million seniors filled a single prescription that met their out-of-pocket threshold and millions of seniors are reaching the catastrophic phase of Part D.

We must act to lower prescription drug prices. I passed out of the Finance Committee a bipartisan and negotiated bill that will lower the cost of prescription drugs. It is called Grassley-Wyden or by its name the "Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act." It saves seniors \$72 billion and taxpayers \$95 billion. It caps out-of-pocket costs at \$3,100 and eliminates the doughnut hole. And perhaps the most important part of it will also cap year-over-year price increases of prescription drugs at the CPI. This also ends taxpayer subsidies to Big Pharma and provides real relief to our seniors.

Let's not waste another minute to lower drug prices. I will work with anyone who wants to pass the bipartisan Grassley-Wyden bill.

In addition to prescription drugs, I am leading the charge to lower the cost of grocery bills. The big four meatpackers who have over 85 percent of the market use anticompetitive tactics to hurt smaller producers or independent family farmers. While independent farmers in Iowa are forced to sell livestock at dirt-cheap prices, the cost to the consumer is climbing to a historic high level. This is happening at the same time the big four packers are reaping record profits.

Just this past week, Sysco—the largest food distributor in the United States—filed a lawsuit against these very same big four packers alleging price fixing. Sysco claims that these packers intentionally reduce the number of slaughtered cattle to inflate beef prices that families must pay at the supermarket.

We must maintain a cash market for cattle producers and thus increase competition. Toward this goal, I am

spearheading two bipartisan bills that sailed through the Senate Agriculture Committee that would do just that.

Another reason why we are seeing high prices on store shelves is the high price of gasoline and diesel. Contrary to what some people believe, food does not grow on grocery store shelves; food comes to the stores on trucks. And our country has never seen prices at the pump as high as they are right now. In fact, gas prices have doubled since President Biden took office.

Instead of focusing on domestic fuel production, the President and his administration have caved to environmentalists in shaping our energy policies. Since energy is an input in every item on the store shelves, energy prices mean climbing prices at the cash register at Hy-Vee in Des Moines, IA, or Walmart anyplace in the country and every other store.

It is time to reverse course on President Biden's energy policies and pursue an "all of the above" strategy. Let's go back to being energy independent rather than energy dependent.

Instead of just talking about inflation and its impact on Iowa families and seniors, it is time for this Congress to stop reckless spending and start focusing on commonsense relief and reforms. I am leading the charge to do just that through targeted tax relief—the savings bill that I talked about; market reforms in key industries to hold down prices, like the cattle bill I was talking about; and by boosting the supply of fuel to keep prices at the pump in check. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in these efforts.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SEMICONDUCTORS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it has been more than a year since the U.S. Senate passed the bipartisan U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, commonly known as USICA. It includes an important provision that Senator MARK WARNER, the Senator from Virginia, and I introduced more than 2 years ago called the CHIPS Act, which is designed to shore up a dangerously vulnerable supply chain of high-end semiconductors from Asia to the United States.

The fact is that the United States makes zero percent of those advanced semiconductors that are necessary for everything from your iPhone to fifth-generation Joint Strike Fighters like the F-35.

Unfortunately, after we passed the bipartisan bill in the Senate, the House decided to go the partisan route and